

'Utopian and dystopian imagination in island literature', a special section of *Island Studies Journal*, 17(2), November 2022

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The island *topos*, since its origins as a representative trope in European discourse, has encompassed multifarious meanings and functions for and within Western culture and literary imagination (Kinane 2016; Lowenthal, 2007; Gillis, 2004). Besides the classics on islands and sea, such as Homer's *Odyssey*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, H.G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, island metaphors continue to be frequently deployed in popular fiction (Crane & Fletcher, 2016, 2017), literature (Dautel & Schödel, 2017), and poetry (Patke, 2018). There has already been much valuable theorisation on island literature both in the form of articles (e.g. Graziadei et al, 2017a, 2017b; Fletcher, 2011) and monographs (e.g. Riquet, 2019; Kinane, 2016). Literature is the product of fantasy and imagination based on reality, and island literature reinforces this idea by providing a geographical and metaphorical space for creative minds to convey their visions on the future of a nation or the whole humanity.

In literary imagination, the island is a fertile land that can be fictionalized both as a utopia and a dystopia. Niall Sreenan (2017) identifies a genealogy of post-Darwinian narratives in which the island facilitates a specifically utopian dream of individual autonomy, which is bound up with the ideology of capitalism. Sreenan's article draws upon philosophical reflections by Gilles Deleuze and conducts comparative readings of four Western literary works centering on island imagery. There remain many other theoretical conceptions to be explored, such as Foucault's theory of the heterotopia and some eco-critical formulations of island ecotopia. Studies of the themes of utopia and dystopia in island literature have, however, tended to take Western perspectives even when discussing non-Western islands. Except for a few pioneering works, such as Luo and Grydehøj's (2017) article on conceptions of islands in ancient and imperial China, there has been insufficient study of the role of islands in non-Western literature and imaginations. The (post)coloniality of islands and the positions of islands within imperialism are increasingly being investigated through revaluations of classics and rediscoveries of neglected works in literary history (Fletcher, 2011; Kapstein, 2017; DeLoughrey, 2019), but much work remains to be done to decentre the West in island literature studies.

This special section of *Island Studies Journal* aims to enrich the scholarship of this exciting field, bringing together the ideas of scholars from different academic disciplines and different parts of the globe. We are seeking papers concerning utopian and dystopian imaginations in island literature. Example of relevant topics include:

- Island and utopias and dystopias in literature
- Heavenly and hellish food, eating, and drinking in island literature (e.g. cannibalism, ambrosia, Fountain of Youth, cursed/disgusting food)
- Colonialism and utopia/dystopia in island literature

- Heterotopia, ecotopia, or other theoretical conceptions of islands in literary interpretation
- Cross-cultural comparisons of utopian/dystopian imagination in island literature.

This special section will be published in November 2022 in *Island Studies Journal (ISJ)*, but individual papers will be published online ahead of print as and when they complete the peer review and editorial process. *ISJ* is a web-based, freely downloadable, open access, peer reviewed journal that publishes papers advancing and critiquing the study of issues affecting or involving islands. It is listed and abstracted in Scopus and Web of Science (Social Science Citation Index).

For further information or if you are interested in submitting a paper, contact: Ping Su (suping1983@gmail.com). Manuscripts should be between 5,000 and 10,000 words, must be written in excellent English, and must be prepared in accordance with the *ISJ* submission guidelines: https://www.islandstudies.ca/guidelines_instructions.html.

Interested authors are asked to submit abstracts of 150–200 words by 28 February 2021. If accepted, initial drafts of full papers will be expected by 30 June 2021. The deadline for final submission is 30 November 2021. All papers will be subject to peer review. Abstracts and papers should be e-mailed to the guest editor, using ‘Special Section on Utopian and dystopian imagination in island literature’ in the subject of the e-mail.

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